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# Parnassus

Inter-Arts Magazine
of Northern Essex Community College
Haverhill, Massachusetts 01830

# Parnassus is the name of the mythological mountain home of the nine muses who inspired humankind in the arts.

The policy of the editorial staff has been to select material for the magazine democratically.

We have read each work submitted and viewed all artwork.

We voted to determine eligibility: a majority vote for a piece meant publication.

Parnassus provides an opportunity for new artists and writers to reach others; it's a showcase of Northern Essex Community College student creativity.

#### Parnassus Profile

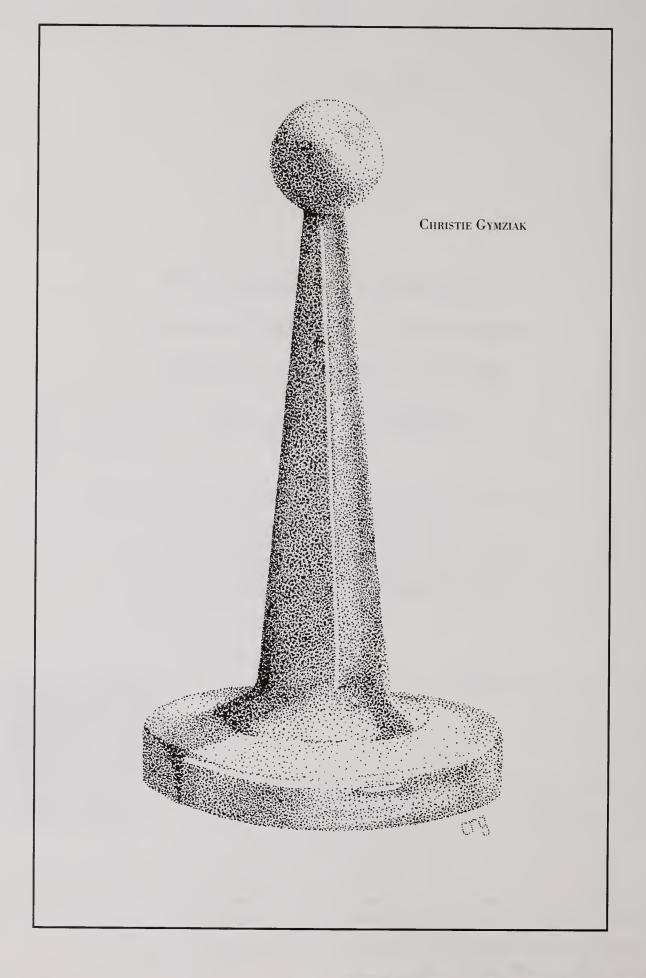
ROLALIE GIACALONE

COVER "RED POPPIES" IN COLORED PENCIL PAGE 5 "TERRACOTTA JARS" IN PASTEL

Rosalie Giacalone is attending Northern Essex part time as she works towards her degree in Illustration. She spends time at home in her woodworking studio, where she carves and paints decorative folk art for the home and garden, which she sells on consignment. When asked about



artists who have inspired her, she immediately responded, "Georgia O'Keefe. I always go back to her." But she also admires the color and style of Mexican artwork, and artists like Diego Rivera, whose influence has stayed with her from the time she lived in Mexico. Rosalie calls herself a realist, and prefers to paint in acrylics Her first goal is to graduate from Northern Essex: "I'm thankful to be where I'm at, to have the opportunity to be at school, paint and draw. The opportunity was finally there." Eventually she might work with children and art, an inspiration that comes from volunteer experiences she has had with kindergartners, and from her eight-year-old son, Joey.



# Table of Contents

Colored Pencil	Rosalie Giacalone Covers	Photograph	Tina Kiarsis21
Parnasuss Profile	Rosalie Giacalone1	Visions of Jack	Justin Termini
Sketch	Cristie Gymziak2	Computer Graphic	Heather Cunningham24
poem	Karolyn Boudreault4	Photos	Cathleen Winship25
Pastels	Rosalie Giacalone5	Relapse	Anonymous26
The One-Way Ticket	_ Adam Carter6	Photograph	Andrew Crawshaw27
Pencil Drawing	Steven Rinaldo8	poem	Zhara Levitsky27
Black/White Graphic	Andrea Shine10	The moon and the butterflies	Eric S. Perkins28
Party Girl	Adam DeLuca11	poem	Karolyn Boudreault30
poem	Kate Tolvanen12	Photograph	Jitka Harmanoua31
Pencil Drawing	Rob Mendoza13	Photograph	Leigh Croteau32
The Beach	Melissa Hannay13	Loneliness	Brendan Cooney32
Crossing Styx	Eric S. Perkins14	Black/White Graphic	Eric Roaf33
Computer Graphic	Dena Smulski14	The Raft in the Lake	Eric S. Perkins34
Computer Graphic	Dena Smulski15	Photograph	Elizabeth McGowan35
Ballerina Girl	Jacquiline Osborne16	Ink Drawing	Heather Cunningham36
Photograph	Beth Anderson17	poem	Chuck Hudson37
Pencil Drawing	Dena Smulski18	Ink Drawing	Steven Rinaldo37
An Exercise	Justin Termini18	The Death of an Everyman	Brendan Cooney38
It's Only Cold Outside	Ken Samoisette19	Ink Drawing	Danielle Grover39
What Might be Death	Diana Finegold 20		

#### KAROLYN BOUDREAULT

the small blonde, confidant sun
you burned those you touched back then
a photographed smile, saturated innocent
picture, cracked with time
a life lived through your Barbie doll
dress up, glamour, what happened to you?

the small fighter didn't pull through dragging your locks through mud of insanity always ran, but you smelt the sea air too the moon slapped you, hit you hard and you crumpled, as leaves in winter cold air seeped into your dead crisp hair

white innocence stripped, a turtle bare
your eyes dance when no one's looking
ravaging thieves, rough hands at night
your tears melt my neck where they fall
I see you though, a thick exterior lets peek
plush carpets sense your troubles, silence speaks well

a guardian, mother to be, but you fell
the tulips did smile at you after all
your green turtle walk, you prevail
why did you steal away the fields?
my reflection stares sympathetically in sunglasses
a shell of your mother, unspoken truths, denial

a tattered porch awaits your return, solemnly smiles paint the window, but they won't peel off



ROSALIE GIACALONE

#### The One-Way Ticket

ADAM CARTER

I had heard the many myths and tales about the drug for years. Stories about that helpless kid who dropped acid and freaked out because he thought he was a glass of orange juice and everyone seemed to be trying to spill him. Ridiculous, right? How about the girl who tried to fly off the roof of a five-story building, or the first-timer who felt so strong, to the point of invincibility, that he tried to stop an oncoming train on its tracks?

Nonsense and gibberish. Towards the end of my high school years, I had discovered various published accounts and essays articulating the LSD experience. And while these didn't encourage, these nonetheless had the power to inspire a certain curiosity. Many of these accounts detailed something of an out-of-body experience, while others spoke in-depth of a looking into the self, and of discovering both virtues and flaws of which the user previously had only a vague awareness. Afterwards the individual could attempt to strengthen virtues and overcome flaws; this ties in with Dr. Timothy Leary's ideas of LSD as a spiritual sacrament.

At this time I was also discovering the occult, with a particular interest in shamanism and "spirit visions". I learned through my studies that often the shamans (of all cultures) took hallucinogenic substances, such as certain mushrooms and peyote, and other wild drugs. With great concentration and trance, they would direct their 'trip' into a spirit vision, believing that the drug could enable them to see beyond our physical reality. This was done in effort to find cures for sickness, to find answers to certain questions from the spirits, or to commune with the Great Spirit, and become one with all things.

And that did it for me! All three of the above-mentioned reasons applied to my motivations. I was uncertain about myself; at that time in my life I was rapidly becoming a stranger to myself. I was changing, and my mind couldn't seem to keep up with all the changes. I needed answers.

I also had a severe sickness: depression. All too often I wouldn't leave the confines of my bedroom, not even to go to school. And going to a shrink didn't help much; I didn't like the idea of paying a complete stranger to listen to my problems. I was beginning to feel the need to experience a different perspective. Looking back, that turned out to be right.

And who, granted the opportunity, would not take the chance to become "One with All Things"?

So I decided to try it. I've spoken many times to friends and acquaintances that have tripped out on acid, but only one of them gave me the impression by their word that LSD gives the user a merciless gaze within. This brought to mind then, and now, a piece of poetry by William Blake:

"But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged: this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If the doors of perception were truly cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, 'till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."

So I had taken it a few times, but a lot of it was of weak potency; I felt a peculiar high and not much else, certainly not the desired effect. Then came the summer of 1999.

I'd chanced upon a friend from early adolescence that I hadn't seen in two years. And he had an awful lot of acid he needed to get rid of. So I bought four doses and shared my psychoactive wealth with a friend, Sean, who lived in Boston.

We dropped our tabs somewhere between 8:30 and 9:00 p.m. The acid came on very slowly, and when I had first notice of it, I got an intuitive feeling that this trip would be like no other. It began as an intense trance. From my head to my ankles I felt light as a feather, to be carried off by the first whispering wind (or breath!). My feet, in contrast, felt as though they had an extra

twenty pounds attached to them, and every step I took kept me firmly rooted to the spot.

Naturally I intended to spend the night at Sean's, as his parents were away. A sort of mild party had unexpectedly got going! People came unbidden to visit, and at its biggest the crowd was probably about ten people thick.

Sean and I were the only ones tripping. Everyone else was drinking beer and smoking pot, aware but not particularly concerned that I was on acid. Nevertheless, I felt utterly naked in front of these people, and not physically. I felt as if one glance from any one set of eyes would give that viewer an unfiltered glance of my soul; by 'soul' I mean the contents of my personality, my loves, my hates, my passions, etc., could all be known and registered at a glance. I knew it would overwhelm me and something bad was bound to happen if it went thus for much longer.

I stayed in Sean's bedroom with only a couple of people present, so I didn't need to get my guard up. There were three girls in the room with me, one of whom I knew somewhat. She sensed my nervousness and wanted to help me calm down; she told me she knew what I was feeling, that she had experienced it before. Her words were soothing; I thought I could feel her voice passing through me, her whispers like-the soft shifting of sands in desert winds. It was blissful.

She asked me if it would be all right for her to sit on my lap, maybe give me a light neck and shoulder massage, whatever. She was drunk, but I sensed in her a genuine desire to connect with me. This would normally be great by me, especially since it seemed to happen so rarely. Except for tonight: sensation was rapidly reaching an unbearably high peak. I could barely withstand the feeling of an ice-cold beer in my hand, never mind having this girl sit on my lap! I politely declined the offer, and she understood.

At one point I wanted another beer, and was getting up to grab one when Marius, one of Sean's friends who I didn't know well, came into the room. I suddenly became terrified that he would take my seat. Utterly terrified! Over a chair!

"Don't take my seat, Marius!"

He looked at me with a smile and laughter. "I won't, man."

I gave him a distrustful look-over and then an intense glare in the eyes.

"Don't take that chair!"

He laughed a little nervously, and in retrospect, I can see why.

"Dude, I said I wouldn't take your chair!"

I looked over at my friend Natasha, still sucking on another beer.

"DON'T let him take my chair!"

Marius was an inch away from freaking out. Natasha stood up.

"Adam, sit down and let me get you that beer, okay?"

"Great!"

How child-like I had become! And this drug had more wonders to offer yet.

So there I was, wishing all these noisy people would leave, for it was their number that kept me nervous. I just didn't know how to conduct myself in the presence of others that weren't tripping with me. Suddenly, it was as if my wish was heard and granted (by who? By what?). One moment the apartment was roaring with laughter and late night drunken dialogue, and the next it was utterly silent; everyone had left in a cluster.

I came out of Sean's room to find him sitting alone, cross-legged. He looked up at me, twanging feverishly at his bass guitar, pupils insanely dilated (another effect of the drug). And as if all I had endured in the last couple of hours wasn't enough, that's when our peak began.

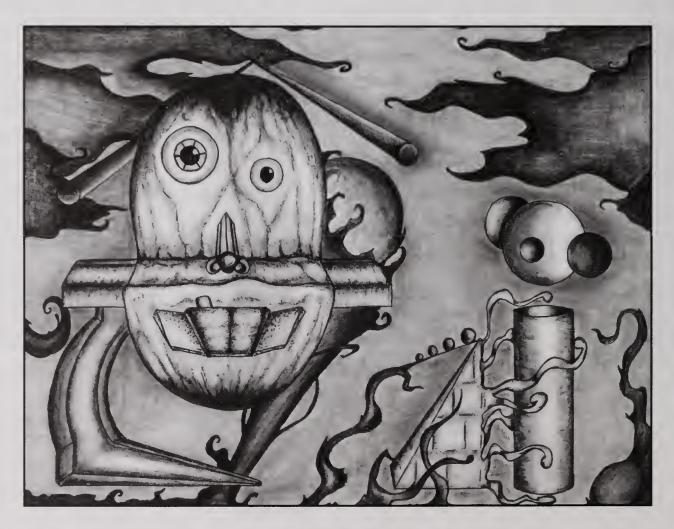
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The next thing I remember is sitting on Sean's couch, thinking. Or rather, attempting to think. I could not for the life of me compose one connected, complete thought. In every direction I looked, a new thought spiraled outward. Stillness is impossible when you're tripping on LSD. It's like you've been jump-started with more adrenaline than the body can handle. I believed that mental stillness would be impossible as well, but later, I turned out wrong in that assumption.

Sean was walking aimlessly around the apartment (though I'm sure that he had imagined a purpose for all that seeking). We kept changing the CDs in the stereo; we played only very specific songs

on every CD, looking for the tunes that most appropriately captured artistically that which we were experiencing. One exception, though, would be Pink Floyd's Dark Side of The Moon; we played that one all the way through.

At one point, despite acid-friendly music, we were losing our grip. We sat next to each other on the couch, silent, in darkness (darkness is preferable to me in this particular state of mind). We were both looking around the apartment, taking in our environment as if we'd never been in that apartment before. I slowly turned my head towards Sean, and he to me. There was a weak light shining into the living room from the



STEVEN RINALDO

PAIRNASSUS

kitchen, by which I could see clearly the look of utter terror in his eyes. For a second I thought he didn't recognize me anymore; he looked like he was ready to tear me apart. Later I was astounded when he told me that I regarded him at that moment with the very same look in my eyes.

He literally jumped off the couch towards a nearby lamp and switched it on.

"We can't think like this!" His words came out seared and breathless. I was feeling relief that no violence had erupted. But I was also scared, on a new level. I became fearful that this trip would never end. It was probably around 2:30 in the morning, and the trip was still rising in intensity. I felt like I would come out of this mentally crippled.

"Will this ever end?" My mind was crawling a razor's edge between madness and stability.

"Oh, of course it will end." Out of nowhere, Sean took on a calm that I was desperate to achieve. My tension was getting too much, now. I didn't believe I would endure this trip without collapsing.

I remember reading about a certain Native American tribe that held a tradition about ingesting Peyote. The candidate, before experiencing the spirit vision of the drug, had to pass a test. They constructed a heavy bow, which had a string that only a strong man could pull all the way back. If the candidate was physically strong enough to pull the bowstring all the way back, then it was deemed that he was spiritually strong enough to endure the peyote trip, and all the things, beautiful and terrifying, that the spirits would reveal to him.

My test didn't come before the trip; it came at the peak. And it was a test of understanding a simple statement, one that would become incredibly meaningful to me later, in a sober state of reflection.

The fear was threatening to explode inside of me.

"What do we do now?" I've probably never sounded more exasperated in my life.

Sean slowly took a seat on the floor, once again cross-legged. He looked seriously at me, and I saw strength in his eyes. It shone in his pupils like the brightest fire, it seemed to seep from his pores into the air, and in my state, I even thought I could see it tied up in his straight, long, tangled blond hair. He inhaled slowly then exhaled slowly, as if (very probably) releasing inner tension.

"Iust embrace it."

BANG! Almost instantaneously, I could feel the fear flowing away from me, just as surely as blood will rinse off skin under a flush of water.

I felt liberated into a state of well being, to a degree that I have never since known. Within what must have been minutes, I had become caught up in a physical, mental, and emotional ecstasy that is frustratingly difficult to relate to a person who hasn't had the experience. I wanted to do a million good deeds for any and everyone, a mind frame that until then was totally alien to me. I wished everyone I knew and loved, and everyone else on earth, for that matter, could know, could feel the absolute and ineffable inner-peace that I was feeling. Everything in that house was subject to unflinching scrutiny; there could have been nothing more amazing in the universe than the texture and the lines in the palm of my hand. Crushed cigarette butts in the ashtray took on an intricate brilliance that they never quite had before. A book I had purchased earlier (in the sober part of the day) was sitting on the coffee table. I looked it over, skirted through its pages soaking in random passages, while regarding it with something akin to reverence; the book took on a kind of miraculousness for me, as if it were a gift of divine providence.

In short: the experience was like being born again. I saw, felt, tasted, and heard everything as if it were my first time experiencing anything .



#### Party Girl

#### ADAM DELUCA

I trapped her inside

The upstairs bathroom.

The party downstairs

Vibrated up our legs.

She backed away,

Unzipped her dress.

As soon as it fell

I dropped to my knees.

Her legs were warm,

Over my shoulders.

She squeezed so tight,

I couldn't hear the music.

Her whole body shook,

Took hold of my tongue.

Her breathless moans.

Rhythm of my fingers.

She pushed me away,

Turned around towards the mirror.

Our thighs touched

Back to front.

Her eyes begging

For quick relief.

My pain hard and hot

All the way in,

Her eyes roll back.

The music stops.

Everyone can hear

Her head pressed against

The mirror banging.

Pushing, shoving

Stuck all the way in.

Her mouth stuck open

Sharp, hot breaths,

She tells me she loves me.

Right then I explode,

A shotgun blast.

Her muscles tighten, hold me in

For a few more seconds

As she screams, smiles.

A cheer from the downstairs crowd.

Soaking wet, she lifts

Her legs, pulling me out,

But presses again, softly,

And sighs, licks my cheek.

The music starts as she

Slips her wet body into her dress,

Trembling as she walks down the stairs.

Back to the party below.

#### KATE TOLVANEN

I don't know what would happen

If I just got in my car

And started to drive.

I wouldn't have a particular

Direction to go in;

Maybe 95 south.

My mind would be focused on the mesmerizing white lines

That passed underneath me.

And the muffled words of

Moby would be in the background of my thoughts,

While my arm let my hand and fingers

Dance in the warm spring wind.

The silver chain wrapped around

The rearview mirror would be still,

Showing me the true beauty of

The amethyst stone dangling from it.

Usually it would be swaying

Back and forth from all the

Twists and turns my car would make.

But straight and level would be my path;

Comfortable within the blue seats and walls,

And coffee stains around the cup holders;

With the scent of the strawberry tree flowing

Through the vents.

A perfect setting for a trip to

Somewhere...

Anywhere...

Away from back there,

To somewhere unknown.

I'm not sure where I'd end up.

# PARNASSUS



ROB MENDOZA

#### The Beach

#### MELISSA HANNAY

I've been in love with you since I discovered what love was four years ago on a beach filled with promises that no one really understood.

Our destiny was written in each grain of sand.

Each breath we drew that day and every day since has brought us to where we were always meant to be...

together.

#### Crossing Styx

ERIC S. PERKINS

It's sort of a dream actually,
A cold chill descends down your spine,
The red eye of the sun casting
No shadow from you in the sand,
A fetidness circling the air like a vulture,
Beyond the fog a black ferry in the distance
Awaits and you see your reflection in the
River, the blues of your eyes

Exposing shadows all their own,
Then your lids slam shut like windows,
You are moving and hear the water beneath you,
And I am there, looking inside of you
And at you looking out your window,
The arms of the barren oak dusted
White and stripped like ancient wallpaper,
Reminding you how naked you are—



DENA SMULSKI

Pondering about the wild things
You've never done, hating yourself
For being so reserved, a photograph
Of your children floats to your head,
Regret comes over you like a shroud,
Painting everything twilight;
Screams come from all directions like
Broken saxophones or schizophrenics,

You float through a sage cloud

And up through a giant white tulip

Toward a light in the far end,

Attended by animals, friends, relatives,

By anthropomorphic pink things...

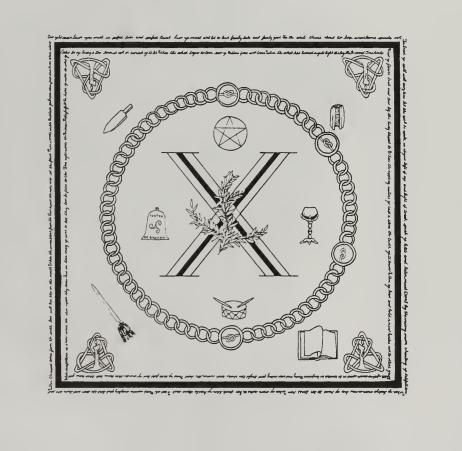
And then that light washes through

You with the pureness of a virgin.

As you step through a giant oval door,

A gaunt figure steps back to you,
Grabbing your hand and pulling
You into the black car of Lethe,
The steam itself releasing bliss
So you taste it, an enormous gulp.
Then suddenly old faces, memories, wounds,
Flee from your mind and disappear
Like dropped mercury.

#### DENA SMULSKI



#### Ballerina Girl

JACQUELINE OSBORNE

Ballerina girl
Dancing on her pedestal
Ballerina girl
Not a care in the world
Ballerina girl
Spinning around
Ballerina girl
As perfect as can be
Ballerina girl
Is not at all like me
Ballerina girl
Collects her flowers
Ballerina girl
Practices for hours
Ballerina girl

Gives me dirty looks

Ballerina girl

Go dance or something!



# An Exercise in Alcohol-Induced Poetry Writing

JUSTIN TERMINI

2:27 am
Drinking whiskey
Thinking about poetry.

So many words Wasted on false dreams And lost love.

Lost loves deserve to be Forgotten,
Left behind,
Discarded on the curb
Like week old trash.

Poetry should reflect life
What's to come
What matters
Not what lingers on,
Grasping desperately at our mind-strings
Like parasites
Sucking away at our souls.

I'll never write Another poem Dedicated to Lost love.

Keep the whiskey flowing
The bottles dry
John Coltrane on the radio.
Embrace the "here"
The "now",
Leave the past
Past.

2:34 am
Smoked my last smoke
Hours ago.
For now I'll close my book,
Close my eyes,
Leave the past where it belongs.



#### It's Only Cold Outside

KEN SAMOISETTE

He stands alone outside her window, his breath expels in a cloud above his head, pearly from the glow of the moon. A dim light shines from underneath the shade of the second floor window. It gives a soft pink glow to the snow on the sill, warm and inviting contrast to the bitter cold of the night. She's inside, he knows it, inside where he once was.

His feet freeze in the snow of her back yard. Nervous and frozen he feels the butterflies in his stomach.

He takes his guitar that is slung over his back, the strings feel as if they'll snap at a touch. An inexpensive acoustic but he makes it sound wonderful. He brushes a dusting of snow off a large cement flowerpot and sits on the ice that brims to the top. He remembers the once warm flowers of spring that were planted here.

He gets as comfortable as he can in his frozen chair. He's no musician, more of a dilettante, but he made sure he knew one song back and forth, their song. The most beautiful song in their young eyes. He begins to strum an easy chord progression beautifully put together. The frozen strings seem to warm as he continues. He's not a singer but he always gently sang this song.

"If ever you are feeling like you're tired and all your uphill struggles leave you headed downhill if you realize your wildest dreams can hurt you and your appetite for pain has drunk its fill"

He continues with the song and it briefly warms his heart. The cold that surrounds him tonight is forgotten. He taps his foot in the snow and a blaze of percussion and rhythm fill his head.

Outside the sound of one lonely guitar but in his mind an orchestra.

When the chorus starts he saddens, "just wait, just wait", he strums the chorus as he becomes unable to continue singing. The lump in his throat chokes him, he continues the second verse in his head. As he sways broken hearted back and forth on his icy flowerpot his breath expels like a thousand cigarettes.

He hasn't once looked at the window while he plays, he keeps his eyes shut through the whole song. When he finishes he opens his eyes and blinks out a frozen tear. He gazes at her window again, softly glowing and unchanged. A year passes as he sits there.

The cold that was forgotten is quickly remembered as he takes his fingers off the strings. Just to move them hurts, he doesn't recall the pain while he was playing but its here now. He takes a deep breath and blows it into his hands to warm them. As he opens his cupped hands a ball of white rises like a magic globe from his palms and disperses into the night. He smiles briefly at the sight but like the vapor of his breath the smile vanishes as well. He stands and slings his guitar over his shoulder onto his back.

One last yearning look up and he walks away following the footprints in the snow that brought him here. He tells himself once again, I'll never play that song again.

#### What Might be Death

DIANA FINEGOLD

Floating on a bed of countless twinkling stars, my gaze turns up to encompass all the beauty around me.

Beams of light burst forth through the clouds of sulfurous liquid, oozing out the pores of the melted earths.

Swirls of colors, bold and bright, spiral down from jet black holes of nothingness.

I open my mouth and let my lips taste the shimmering pale glow of the moon rays.

I open my ears to hear the voices of ecstasy
echo soft melodies against the walls of the shadows.
Thousands of gentle fingers pressed delicately against my skin
guide me through the awe-inspiring scenes
of what might be death.

My tongue licks the breeze of hollowed sea shells drifting by

I do not know whether I am merely dreaming, or if I am finally free. All I know is that time has stopped

And I remain here

Drifting and yet bounded by

all the beauty that embraces me.

on the waves of eternity.



PARNASSUS



TINA KIARSIS

# Visions of Jack: A Walk Through the Dusty Streets of Lowell

JUSTIN TERMINI

I walked down the cobblestone sidewalk, a cigarette dangling from my lips. A cool spring breeze flowed through the air, sifting the dirt from the ground into a fine misty haze. The noises of the surrounding streets came drifting from all sides, creating a symphony of city life: horns honking, people shouting, the incessant beat of feet on the sidewalk, feet marching out the notes of an unseen orchestra. Somewhere a child cried. My mind shut these noises out, hearing only the sound of the thoughts running wildly through my brain. These were the streets he walked, the Lowell of another generation, a time when the mills burst with economic prosperity, a harsh contradiction to the dilapidated buildings which now loomed over the city like the hollow remains of a war torn nation. Scenes from the past filtered through the walls of the modern world. Buildings were splashed with the faded signs of long dead businesses; rusted train tracks ran silently through the streets unnoticed; statues stood proudly among a commercialized wasteland of fast food restaurants and mall chain stores. I walked silently through the streets, my feet stirring the dust into a spidery cloud of smoke.

Signs of Jack Kerouac littered the streets of Lowell, hidden behind a wall of faceless commodity. A tattered copy of Maggie Cassidy sat on the shelf at a record store, surrounded by music and fashion magazines. Harsh brick walls of alleys brought visions of Kerouac's writing to my mind, the stones etched into the pavement like dark red tombstones. I walked past the St. Jean Baptiste Church, where his funeral was held in 1969. The gray slabs of brick seemed to bleed with intensity, spilling down onto the street below. Two blocks down from Bridge Street I came upon the memorial set up for Kerouac, a small set of drab red

stones circled around a granite bench. Excerpts of his writings plastered the stones, his words forever set into the flesh of the city. My eyes scanned the faces of the stones, reading through passages from On the Road, Mexico City Blues, The Dharma Bums, Dr. Sax, and others; each seeming to fill in a portion of a sketch of the author's life. A single stone read Jack Kerouac, the sun gleaming off the shiny surface. A homeless man staggered through the park, mumbling to himself, dragging a broken metal cart behind him. The wheels of the cart scratched against the ground, creating a harsh scraping sound with every turn. His olive green trench coat billowed behind him like a filthy flag wavering in the wind.

I made my way back to Central Street, past another stretch of window fronts. A hot dog stand stood on the sidewalk, the vendor chatting casually with a woman in a business suit. I lit another cigarette, shielding the lighter's flame from a strong gust of wind. I passed over a small wooden bridge running over a canal of some sort. The water reflected the dull shine of the afternoon sun, creating a blurring image of the crumbling brick walls of one of the city's many abandoned mill buildings. As I continued down the street the quaint cobblestone sidewalks of downtown Lowell gave way to the cracked pavement and spray-painted walls of the urban side streets. I walked past stores with metal bars over the windows, protecting the insides from the seedy element of the city's outskirts. Trash littered the strips of shredded grass beyond the sidewalk, painting the landscape with discarded newspapers

and twisted soda cans. A dog howled in the distance, bleeding through the sound of engines roaring on the distant highway.

The gates of Edson Cemetery stood gracefully over the empty strip of Gorham Street, melting into the clear blue sky in shades of stormy blackness. A small brick caretaker's building stood next to the gate, looming over the graves, giving a sense of authority to the deserted wasteland before it. I walked past the continuous rows of tombstones, following the photocopied map given to me by an old man in the National Park Visitors Center. The gray tones of markers clashed with the thick green ocean of grass, some interrupted by the sandy brown patches of fresh graves. A thick slab of concrete stone shot out of the ground, the word Father etched into the top in bold letters. In the grass next to it lay a twin stone, overturned. The inscription read: Mother.

Jack Kerouac's grave lay between 7th and 8th Streets, one row up from the paved path. It is a small rectangular plaque, set into the ground. I stood before the marker, looking down and wondering how Lowell's most famous son could have such a small, nondescript gravestone. Four pens stuck out of the ground before the marker, pointing upwards toward the sky, writing end down. Cigarette butts were scattered around the grave. I saw a beer cap next to the stone, Killian's Irish Red, next to a small American flag, its end blowing in the brisk wind. A circular wreath stood behind the grave on a metal frame made of thin wire. I knelt down, running my fingers over the words on the

stone. Ti Jean, John L. Kerouac, the letters raised in dark print. A corner of blue wrapping paper stood out beneath a pile of dirt. I moved my hand toward it, brushing away the thick grains of sand. Upon lifting a corner of the paper I could see words written in red ink on the blank side, one word particularly catching my eye: happy. I covered the note with more dirt, leaving it unread, believing it was not meant for living eyes. A strong wind floated through the air, causing the Styrofoam wreath to twist on its stand. I took two cigarettes out of my pack, lit one, and left the other next to the pens in front of the grave.

As I walked along the rail between the rows of graves I saw an old black man in a brown tweed jacket on the other side of the fence. He was walking slowly, gripping the wrought iron slats of the fence, carefully placing each foot in front of the other. He looked at me as I walked by, the deep lines of his face showing years of wear beneath his dark fedora. He nodded his head in my direction, looked back towards the path in front of him, and continued his deliberate pace along the fence. I looked up to the sky, the clear blue starting to fade into milky violet as day became night. A light breeze flowed through the air, rattling the branches of the tall weeping willows towering in the crisp evening air.



HEATHER CUNNINGHAM

#### Photos

#### CATHLEEN WINSHIP

The smooth glossy finish,

vivid color of an old photograph,
captures my eyes,
the touch of my fingertips.
As I glance through the album,
a walk through time with my eyes,
the memories appear like flashbacks.
My attention focuses on one simple photo.
My eyes lock
with those of the characters in the picture,
as if they are speaking to me,
"things should be different" they would say.
I look away, remembering those times.

I imagine what the album would look like if dad had not left, if divorce wasn't possible.

In this picture I am five, dressed in crisp white satin. My sister, next to me, only six, clothed in the same attire.

My brother, ten at the time, awkward with buck teeth and shaggy hair, stands behind us, next to mom.

I can hear his squeaky voice ringing in my ears.
"I am the man in the family, I am here now, I will protect you,

it is me who will walk you down the aisle."

Mom, standing almost crooked,
a fake smile on her already wrinkly face,
has her hands on each of our shoulders.
Then and now I know she is proud,
ashamed at the same time.
It was our kindergarten graduation,
a big step in any family's life.

I take a moment,
trying to imagine dad standing next to mom.
Would our facial expressions remain as they are in the picture?
Would we be standing in that driveway,
in front of the old paint-chipped ranch?

Nothing would be the same.

To try to change what has happened, imagine my life with someone so foreign, would be too much for a camera to take.

I think the photo would come out blurry.

#### Relapse

#### Anonymous

I remember walkin' in to that room,

low lit with black lights and the windows covered up.

I remember he was cookin' up in the comer and I thought to myself

"Why's he still doin' this after what happened to me?"

I remember watchin' him tap that needle and stick it in his arm and the look on his face,

like God was singin' in his ear.

I remember the belt dropped to the floor and his lips turned blue and I thought

"What's he doin'?"

And he let out some air but didn't take it back in and then neither did I and I called 9-1-1 while my so-called buddy dragged him by his feet with

the needle still in his arm

towards the bathroom for no reason whatsoever yellin' "Wake up!"

I remember that other sonofabitch hidin' all their shit in a drawer,

screamin' at me for callin' the cops and cryin' cause he didn't want to go to jail.

Not because my friend lay their dyin'.

I remember bein' down on my knees poundin' my fists against his chest and his black lips parted with a sound like the one a horse makes

when you shoot it.

I remember I was so crazy it took three cops and an EMT to pull me off him and hold me down, and all the while my friend lay dead and they were yellin'

"Move away, there isn't much time!"

I remember that terrible needle they pulled out of their bag that seemed ten times the size of the one they pulled out of his arm and that other sonofabitch took one look and puked on my shoes, but I didn't know 'cause I was starin' at those dark eyes searchin' for life.

And then they opened.

And that heaving cry like he got kicked in the stomach, and he didn't remember me but he recognized the ambulance driver and said

"Hey, coach."

And his old coach smiled and the cops let go of my arms and legs and said things like,

"Your friend should be dead," and "You should be proud of yourself."

But I remember I wasn't proud and I looked down at my wet, stinking shoes and thought

"This is my fault."

And when the ambulance left with my friend and that stupid sonofabitch got in his car and went someplace else to get high,

I opened that drawer and took all of the needles and spoons and cotton and razor blades and the lighters and all of the little brown bags and I put 'em in my coat and I left.

And that's all I remember.



Andrew Crawshaw

#### ZHANA LEVITSKY

Not unlike the moon, bending and stretching in the night, our bodies are in a constant nocturnal flux. Pale or dark or rosy we offer up our skin, to be claimed or to be marked. We wax and wane in front of each other. Even if we are slow and passionate, it's much too fast for contemplation. If I could just pause my existence with you in that moment, if I could cover our air with unflavored gelatin, and examine you frame by frame until I understood it your image would be etched in my mind like that permanently. Everyone is everyone else's celestial body.

#### The moon and the butterflies

ERIC S. PERKINS

There is one side of the mind;

A lightning blue tunnel funneled with monarchs spiraling through glitter To the white foam of the sea.

A sun-beaten bliss-

On the other end

The awful hyacinth unleashes its

Violent stench.

Here the hairy tarantulas move in rows

Through fields of grass that irritate my feet like

Calloused skin.

Fumy clouds inhabit this space

And a mist of incoherency drizzles into my head.

The moon is a mother, nightlong

She guards her earth with a giant grin

And a wicked misery.

Bone-light white with an orange ring and overly sensitive,

She screams with the complete O-gape of

Utter insanity. I live here:

There are no doors

And the windows each have only one tree.

Creepy figs, barren as hell, with grim fingers that

Stretch out like grapevines in all directions

Closing me in like a horrible hug of monogamy.

The figs never grow. I've never questioned why...

PARNASSUS

Here the church bell gongs twice a day and

Distant voices of my pious relatives remind me

Of my sins.

I drink a bubbling blue drink and the butterflies come back again.

Here the light

is always on,

A room of crushed velvet violet walls

And a panoramic view.

The monarch knows nothing of ambivalence,

It just flies around looking beautiful

Or sits on a lily to prove its Goddess purity.

The moon on the other hand always greets me

**Night** 

After

Night,

Especially when I can't sleep.

Looking out the window of my bedroom,

Above the willow

I stare at her impetuously

Wondering when the white

Of her egg will wane to the comforting

Stillness

Of blackness and

Silence...

#### KAROLYN BOUDREAULT

a sparrow is perched upon my shoulder whispering impetuous ideas of merriment a madness gone rampant its eyes roll around with insanity in its tiny skull I turn briskly in the direction it flies chirping urgently for me to follow hesitantly, I give in, swayed calm, mild doubt swims in my brain a tilt of the head, it is silenced frantic wild tweets swirl in the stale air in the distance, a path lay in pale yellow an orange moon raised high hues of a maddened gravestone on hallows eve I break to a sprint promises of loyalty have won me over hair, short golden stands batter my face the air is thin the chirping has stopped I am alone, no clue yet the smell of familiarity is pungent throughout my nostrils sour bitter smell, a rotten peach cold wet sand worms in-between my toes the frigid water licks my feet the finish line always ends here.

PAIRNASSUS



JITKA HARMANOUA



LEIGH CROTEAU

#### Loneliness

**Brendan Cooney** 

i have a window in my room and when i look out i see just one tree. standing small like a new girl in class staring at her feet in silence.

tough as its bark may be, it has bare spots where insects have made homes.

her figure, her weakness, taken advantage of; a slanted game of dodgeball.

its leaves are dull, green and brown; last to come into full bloom. she doesn't raise her hand; barely ever speaks at all.

from my window i can see just one tree bending and bowing to the wind.

bending over to tie her penny loafer shoelace and never coming up for air.

PARNASSUS



ERIC ROAF

#### The Raft in the Lake

ERIC S. PERKINS

Out drifting on that wooden raft,

We made ourselves from logs and hemp rope,
In the coolness of the lake, the calm of the water,
The sun coming down on our careless bodies,
Shooting its rays in rivulets and down in tendrils to the
Epicenter of our cells and veins firing up the tentacles within
Like cupid's arrow. And the soft wind gliding by,
Just once in a while, to comfort the slight discontent too much
Direct sunlight will endure. And you looking in my eyes and speaking of
Your wondrous affairs with visions, visions of the future, our future, oh and
Your love. How deeply you felt for me, how I was your hope, what made
You happy in the world. While seagulls flew by and my eyes leant their openness
To take in the beautiful sand, the smell of the woods around me, the colors the shadows would make upon it, the gorgeous birds I could spot in ferns, maples, and giant oaks so old I could get lost in their intricacy.
Then I'd turn back to you for the fire we shared, it was electrical, our bond, our magic.

Then I'd turn back to you for the fire we shared, it was electrical, our bond, our magic, We were fused together as atoms of the same molecule. Then I'd whisper to you about My grandiose plans, enlightenment, my thirst for knowledge, my passion

To create, how I wished to evolve from any situation and ascend In every way possible, even my loquacious chatter of foolishness

And rumor I'd shared with you, and we'd laugh, the feeling of which

Would soak my body in joy and I'd roll my eyes and get lost
In how happy I was. The freedom was inexorable,

Unquestionably immaculate! This fervor, this zeal—

Then the raft we'd made lost a length of wood.

We joked about how at least both of us could swim,

And I reminded you of how once I was a lifeguard,

Then we glided down the lake for a few more hours,

Throwing away the desolate feelings and the

Quieting my nerves, mind,

My entire body was fully complete

Despondence of ever being unhappy,

And we made love; I even told you I loved you,

Gave you a part of myself, and it was reciprocated.

Weeks had passed and every day we'd go back out on the lake On our raft, loving each other and getting lost on the heat-lightning flicker Of wild debauchery, floating about in the middle of paradise. But then this one time I had noticed something, the birds were no longer here, their sweet chirpers Lost in the wind and their innocence as well. We'd lost another length of wood From the raft, and I saw something in you, something odd, I couldn't Place its meaning, but it was there and it showed itself and I could Not quiet my dislike for it. Now nearly half the raft is missing And so is the summer. The fall is coming on stronger than I'd like and I age and grow old of incessant repetition. This thing I once saw in you has multiplied and Produced offspring like a virus. And the Winter has marked its death, the once Colorful leaves of autumn diminished And wilted and all that could

Day I did it. I finally Broke the wood in Half, splitting it **Apart into bits** And bits. Darling,

Come was the blistering cold

I'm Sorry

The lake **Nearly** 

**Dried** 

Up.



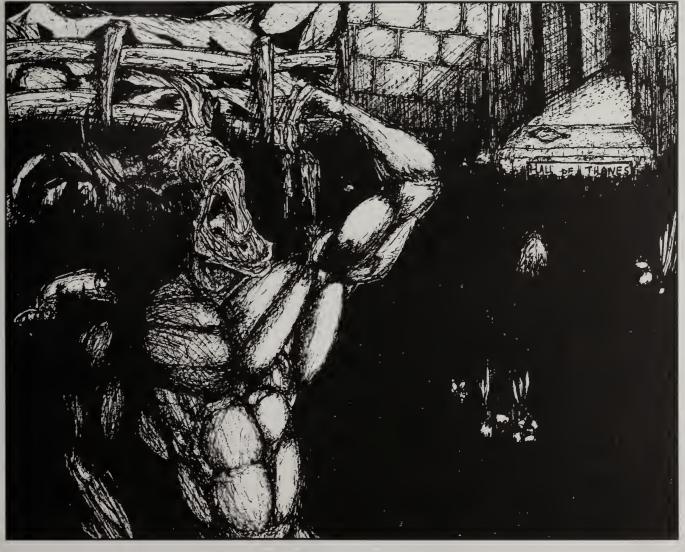


HEATHER CUNNINGHAM

# PARNASSUS

#### CHUCK HUDSON

My life is like a raindrop.
Falling high from the sky,
The heavens drop me downward
Until, Bang! There's the ground.
As if the worst has already come,
And the only way to go is up.
Unless the pavement takes me under,
In which case I'm screwed.
That will be the end of my Existence,
And life will be over.



# The Death of an Everyman

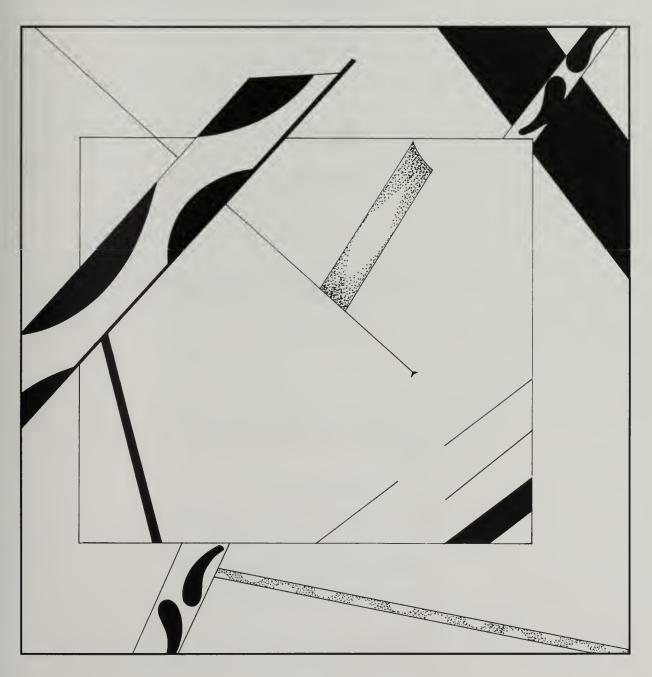
Brendan Cooney

riding in the last boxcar,
his tales of open spaces conflict
with the screech of the rushing steel beneath
the Alabama Mineral.

somewhere clouds break over
purple mountains, letting out
a tinted, dirty yellow sun.
and in the distance, someone is taking in a weary breath, exhaling
a ragged soul.

god bless you, empty bottles of blackberry brandy. god speed you, lonely harmonicas,

# IFALENIASSUS



Danielle Grover

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